



2011 Report:
Oral Healthcare for Adults with Developmental Disabilities
in Arizona

Presented to
Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (ADDPC)
Sheila E. Murphy, Ph.D.
February 24, 2012




Purpose and Context of Study

- Fulfill public policy priorities of ADDPC, requiring update of 2006 study.
- Concurrency of funding reduction for adult oral healthcare in Arizona with 2011 study:
 - Consumers' concern about how to meet their oral healthcare needs
 - Dental practitioners' needs for serving the adult population of consumers, given the absence of public funding
 - Stakeholders' recognition of the necessity of establishing systems of service
 - Recognition by the general public of the relationship between oral health and overall physical health



Selected Oral Health Conditions and Associated Medications

- "Dry Mouth" – Caused by the following commonly prescribed medications:
 - Sedatives
 - Antidepressants
 - Decongestants
 - Muscle relaxants
 - Diuretics
 - Anti-pain
 - Narcotic pain
 - High blood pressure
 - Antacids
 - Antihistamines
- Inflammation – Caused by the following commonly prescribed medications:
 - High blood pressure
 - Immunosuppressive
 - Selected chemotherapy




Dental Hygiene and General Health

Dental Professional Perspectives

- The general public would benefit from more education in understanding the relationship between oral health and the general health and well-being of individuals
- Neglect of oral healthcare for 2-3 years can result in diabetes and/or heart disease
- Dental infection can result in death

Priorities for Addressing the Oral Healthcare Challenge


- Integrate oral healthcare into Individual Service Plan (for those persons served by DDD)
- Train and offer incentives for caregivers to assist with routine prevention
- Implement a regimen of brushing, flossing
- Eliminate soda pop, including sugar-based and sugar-free beverages
- Establish routine dental visits and cleaning of teeth



Quotations from Service Population


"Has had pain because of no dental coverage. I put him on my insurance. Still [costs] a lot of money we don't have. I think you could have come up with programs for adults. Your planning council don't care about his pain. We're on a fixed income and to pay a dentist is very costly. Signed by Grandmother and Guardian"

"My son needs assistance soon to have his mouth looked at because I want him to be able to chew his food and not just swallow everything that goes into his mouth. I have a fear he might choke one day. I hope you can put yourselves in his place. See you are able to go to a dentist or pharmacy to take care of yourselves or your loved ones, but my son or any brain-damaged individual is unable to. His last visit resulted in having six teeth removed. Some were under the gum line or on the nerve (exposed) and most were black from infection. Put yourselves in his place, please. Signed, Mother/Guardian"




Quotations from Consumers and Families

- "I have been really struggling to get my son's dental work. Last time he was able to go was 4-5 years ago when it was briefly covered at the AZ School of Dentistry. They were unable to start an IV there. He was trying to get up and has hard-to-reach veins . . . they sent him to an outpatient surgery clinic and he was sedated before arrival. He is in daily pain, but I'm unable to pay for those expensive procedures. Also, he has a very large tongue (Down Syndrome and small palate). I can't even see his lower teeth to brush them properly. I just guess where they are and use an electric brush. He has a strong gag reflex and vomits easily sometimes when brushing (or attempting). AZ School of Dentistry doesn't want to attempt treatment now because of prior difficulties. He's also terrified of dentists (and doctors) and IVs. He has deformed and missing teeth (born without many). I'm afraid he'll lose what few he has if I don't do something soon. It's very bad for him to have this chronic infection in his mouth, as it could spread to his heart and cause myocarditis. People with disabilities are in desperate need for free or reduced services. Note: On front of survey: "I am very pleased to receive this survey. There is a TREMENDOUS need for dental services for disabled people. Thanks! It gives us hope!"




Preface to Recommendations

- Reflects dental view of consequences of delaying or neglecting oral healthcare
- Replace use of emergency room care with dental office visits
- Severe reduction of funding for oral healthcare
- Need for education about link between oral health and general health
- Identify reasons and benefits for providing dental services to adults with developmental disabilities
- Explore ways to provide oral healthcare for citizens age 18 and older (based upon income levels)
- Need to build oral health into Individual Service Plans (ISP)
- Need for professional dental care in remote, rural locations



Strategic Approach to Recommendations

- Build statewide awareness campaign, share knowledge, and determine level of need
- Build system for discovering needs, making service available, and scheduling dental procedures
- Initiate statewide program of caregiver training and re-training on scheduled basis
- Develop database for "clean and screen" campaign
- Update database, showing available dentists in needed locations as part of campaign



Strategic Approach to Recommendations (Continued)

- Simplify delivery services, especially:
 - Diagnostic screening
 - Cleaning of teeth
 - Caregiver training and support materials




Strategic Approach to Recommendations (Continued)

- Provide motivation for involvement of dental professionals, contributors, caregivers, and adult consumers, through:
 - Tax incentives
 - Professional recognition for dental professionals
 - Adjusted insurance fees for needed preventive care
 - Awards for purchasing goods and services for caregivers



Strategic Approach to Recommendations (continued)

- Communicate key message to elected officials and government leaders:
 - Oral healthcare as a way of maintaining health and well-being, especially for citizens with developmental disabilities




Strategic Approach to Recommendations (Continued)

- Establish alternative funding stream (non-governmental)
 - Foundation grants
 - Community, business, and individual funding
 - Tax-free status for contributions
 - Support services for adults aged 18+ with developmental disabilities




Strategic Approach to Recommendations (Continued)

- Develop a commission for support, reform and action to support oral healthcare for Arizonans with developmental disabilities, including:
 - Dental professionals
 - Caregivers
 - Consumers
 - Business leaders
 - Leaders of agencies serving adults with developmental disabilities




Thomas F. Gilbert's Model of Human Performance (2007)

Knowledge Deficit	Instrumentation Deficit	Motivation Deficit
<i>Can be addressed by</i> ↓	<i>Can be addressed by</i> ↓	<i>Can be addressed by:</i>
Training and Education	Tools and Instruments	Incentives (monetary and/or non-monetary)




Address Gaps in Knowledge: Statewide Awareness Campaign – Oral Health and General Health

- Develop a high-profile task force to communicate the message:
 - Involve consumers, dental professionals, medical professionals, persons representing agencies that manage funds
 - Involve business, government, and community leaders to lend visibility and support, as well as persons whose families share a commitment to serving persons with developmental disabilities
 - Build relationship among subcommittees representing needs of small, medium, and large communities; and urban, suburban, and rural communities
 - Document need and resource base of medical/dental resources, funding support from service organizations, foundations, and individual participation in a community-based structure




Address Gaps in Knowledge (Continued)

- Establish event-based timeline with in project management format
- Build public relations campaign: emphasizing
 - Articles
 - Radio and television publicity
 - Messages on social networks Facebook and Twitter
 - Bulletins for government leaders and elected officials
- Develop and use training materials to support oral health, emphasizing:
 - Caregivers
 - Family members
 - Adult consumers




Selected Initial Tools for Task Force to Provide

- Provide Assistive technology for preventing problems with teeth:
 - Mechanical toothbrushes
 - Flossers
 - Instructional materials
- Furnish hardware, software, and transport:
 - Provide mobile dental service units
 - Offer tele-dentistry for diagnosis and treatment
 - Limit mileage and travel time
- Offer easy-to-use whiteboard-based checklists for use by adult consumers and caregivers:
 - To facilitate care
 - To help with follow-through




Tasks for the Task Force – to Motivate Support

- Develop fee share program that facilitates contributions by non-dental contributors for professional services
- Establish one or more non-profit organizations as funding mechanism for:
 - Foundations
 - Service organizations
 - Individual contributors




Tasks for the Task Force (Continued)

- Promote large-scale, statewide oral healthcare prevention and treatment for adults with developmental disabilities
- Focus fundraising to support "Clean and Screen" initiative, through:
 - Foundation grants
 - Service organization funding
 - Individual support
- Establish mechanisms for citizen and organizational contributions to dental care
 - Build awareness of the public regarding funding needs
 - Reduce exclusive reliance upon dental professionals for funding




Tasks for the Task Force – to Motivate Funding Support (Continued)

- Ensure proper third-party coding of services to ensure proper and timely payment to dentists
- Support opportunities to build dental practice of participating professionals serving consumer population
- Build rewards to fund the development of post-graduate specialties in dentistry that serves individuals with developmental disabilities.



Tasks for the Task Force – to Motivate Funding Support (Continued)

- Provide rewards for caregivers and adult consumers for participating in and showing results of prevention activities
- Recognize donor organizations that contribute to prevention or "clean and screen" campaign
- Provide organized, well-publicized, campaigns for prevention
 - Start with adult consumers with developmental disabilities
 - Expand later to general population of the State



Tasks for the Task Force – to Motivate Funding Support (Continued)

- Enlist dentists and dental hygienists to participate in a service campaign:
 - To screen patients on specific dates across the state
 - To obtain data on consumers as a whole
- Formulate and document regional and local database that show:
 - Oral healthcare need
 - Provider care
 - Community support
- Develop different community-based models that can be used in varying locations
